

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated example. A recent Time Magazine inquiry found that in filling positions at vital government agencies, the Bush administration has put connections ahead of credentials. Time notes in a September 25 article that "connections, not qualifications, have helped an unusually high number of Bush appointees land vitally important jobs in the Federal Government."

Madam Speaker, this cronyism must end. Our tax dollars should pay for government that works for everyone, not just the President's friends. The American people deserve better.

#### SECURITY AGENDA

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, while the Democrats are working to develop a message for the upcoming year, Republicans have more than a message. We have an agenda: the security agenda.

We know that Americans have strong views on how this country ought to run, and this Republican majority represents those views. We believe in focusing on four areas: retirement security, homeland security, economic security, and moral security.

We are aggressively fighting terrorism both here at home and abroad to strengthen our national and homeland security. We continue to work to be certain that our seniors are taken care of and provided for in their retirement years. We are working to keep taxes low, regulation light, and shrink the growth of government to be certain that our economic security is not threatened.

Madam Speaker, we want to preserve the right of every American to worship as we choose, defend the sanctity of marriage, and we are fighting to advance the culture of life in order to guard our Nation's moral security.

Madam Speaker, Republicans are focused on these security issues. We know this is an agenda where the American people join us in the actions they would like to see.

#### WHITE HOUSE STONEWALLING OF VALERIE PLAME LEAK INVESTIGATION

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, sadly, 2,000 American troops have now died in Iraq due to a war based on fabrications of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Two years have passed since the Bush White House breached national security by leaking a covert CIA agent's name to reporters to smear a former ambassador who questioned their misleading case for war. Why has President Bush not acted on this reprehensible act?

Anyone who follows the news now knows that the White House Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove is implicated in leaking Valerie Plame's identity to Time reporter Matthew Cooper. We also know that it was the Vice President's Chief of Staff, Scooter Libby, at the heart of charges leaking Plame's identity to New York Times reporter Judith Miller.

Two years ago the White House press secretary told reporters, "If anyone in this administration was involved in it, they would no longer be in this administration." But that was before it was clear that Karl Rove was indeed involved. President Bush now says staffers will only be fired if they committed a crime.

Talk about lowering the bar. The Bush administration was right at first when it said that anyone involved in this serious breach of our national security would be handed their walking papers.

The stonewalling and the coverup of the White House must finally come to an end. Our country must do better. The world is watching.

#### BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. In West Virginia alone, 270 women will lose their lives to breast cancer in 2005 while an estimated 1,410 new cases will be diagnosed.

The impact of breast cancer goes well beyond the individual to impact her family, her friends, as well as change the path in life the woman is leading.

Regular breast self-examinations, mammograms, and regular visits with a doctor give a woman her greatest chance for overcoming breast cancer.

These reasons are why women, especially women over 50 and women who have a history of breast cancer, should visit their doctor regularly. My husband Charlie lost his mother and his aunt to breast cancer over 30 years ago. Since that time advancements in treatment and educational efforts have increased the 5-year survival rate to 98 percent if the cancer is found and treated before it spreads.

As this Republican-led Congress continues its commitment to fund research efforts, we must also continue efforts to educate women and ensure they have access to proper health care. We owe it to thousands of women, and their families, we have lost to breast cancer. We owe it to ourselves and our daughters for their futures.

#### THE SAD MILESTONE OF 2,000 U.S. TROOPS KILLED IN IRAQ

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, we mark another sad and tragic milestone in the war in Iraq. Two thousand American soldiers have been killed in the war in Iraq.

We must end this war. How many more of America's finest have to die for this war before we realize that the quagmire in Iraq cannot be solved by military force, and that our occupation is counterproductive?

Iraq has been a colossal failure of American policy. From the beginning this administration has waged a campaign of misinformation and has continued to deliberately mislead the public and this Congress about the realities on the ground. The truth is that Iraq will never be free and the insurgency will not end until we end our occupation and allow the decisions about the future of Iraq to be made in Baghdad, not Washington.

As Americans we lament the loss of every American life and every American injury and every Iraqi civilian casualty. We mourn the first casualties as much as the 2,000th casualty.

Now more than ever, we need to support the troops. Support the troops by bringing them home.

#### IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF THE PATRIOTISM OF KATELIN RICHTER OF WATERTOWN, MINNESOTA

(Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize 16-year-old Katelin Richter, a student at Watertown-Mayer High School in my hometown.

Katelin recently wrote an essay on the importance and relevance of the Pledge of Allegiance, which was published in a large newspaper in our home State. The theme of Katelin's essay is that the language of the Pledge of Allegiance is the core values held by Americans, that we are one Nation under God, and that it should not be attacked by activist judges.

I think she is right.

Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize the patriotism of Katelin Richter. It is through young voices such as hers that our great Nation will remain strong.

#### CRONYISM IN THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION: DAVID SAFAVIAN, THE MICHAEL BROWN OF PROCUREMENT

(Mr. OWENS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OWENS. Madam Speaker, together Americans can do better in showing Iraq and the rest of the world how true democracy will not tolerate corruption. We must set better examples than the Bush administration has set.